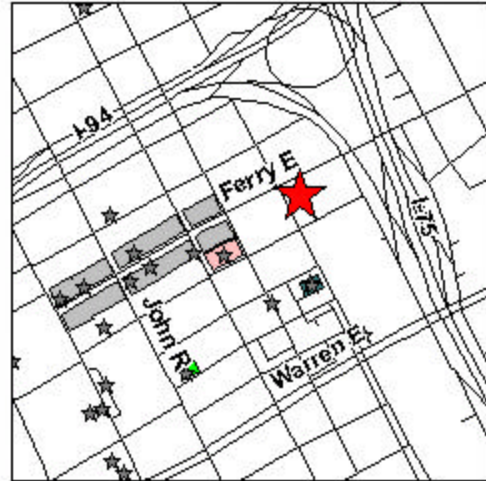


D.M. Ferry & Company Superintendent's House

612 East Ferry.

Local v 6/22/87
State
State Marker
National



D. M. Ferry & Company Superintendent's house circa 1893.

Historic overview:

D. M. Ferry Seed & Co. or later known as D. M. Ferry Co. was the largest producer and distributor of vegetable and flower seeds in the world for over 40 years. Dexter Mason Ferry was born in and grew up around farms in New York. In 1856, four years after moving to Detroit he co-founded the firm of M. T. Gardner & Co., seedmen. He began as junior partner but later rose to head of the firm. By 1867 two new partners joined the firm and the name was changed to D. M. Ferry & Co. until 1930. By 1930, the company had seed farms on four continents, five warehouses in downtown Detroit and land in Michigan. That year they merged with C. C. Morse & Co., the leading seed merchants of the Pacific coast. Dexter M. Ferry Jr. became the head of the merged corporation. In 1959 the company moved its operation to Kentucky but its headquarters remained in Detroit until the end of that year when they moved to California.

The superintendent's house was built across the street from the seed farm and garden. It was built in 1885 by Patrick Dee at the cost of \$6000. The seed farm and garden served as a testing ground for new varieties of seeds. The first resident superintendent was a plant expert and one of the first people to apply the theory of live breeding of plants.

The house is an Eastlake influenced Queen Anne with its variety of building materials, colors and textures. The house is 2½-stories with a rough-faced, coursed limestone foundation, orange common brick on the first floor and octagonal shingle siding on the second floor. Multi-planned roofs, box bay windows and a stringcourse of decorative console brackets are some of its other features. The house has recently undergone a thorough rehabilitation.

